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In Memoriam: Harry van Oorschot

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Figure 1. Harry van Oorschot, Amsterdam, 16 March 2014. Photo by Raanya de Vos.

At the blessed age of 84, Harry van Oorschot passed away on 28 September 2017. He was a notable member of the Dutch and European lepidopterological circles. At the age of 13, Harry developed a strong interest in butterflies. Four years later, in 1950, he joined the Nederlandse Entomologische Vereniging. He had left secondary school early to work in the company of his father (as an apprentice in vulcanisation), and attention to the butterflies was necessarily confined to his then sparse spare time. Nevertheless, in a couple of years, Harry felt that the Dutch fauna was too limited for his appetite. At the meetings of the Nederlandse Entomologische Vereniging, he spoke frankly about his new love, European butterflies, at a time when most interest of Dutch entomologists was focused on their own fauna.

On 6 April 1971, at the age of 38, Harry was appointed an honorary staff member of the Zoologisch Museum of the University of Amsterdam (ZMA), with his main task the arrangement and expansion of the collection of European butterflies. This was the kind of work he liked most. He could be found in the collection whenever his work in the vulcanisation business (which he later took over from his father) permitted. In 2006 he was awarded the medal of the ZMA for his endeavours, but the beautiful collection of European butterflies of the ZMA is the most lasting monument of Harry's input.

In the 1970's, Harry, together with the then head of the entomological department of the ZMA, Dr. G. Kruseman, set up the so-called 'monthly open Saturdays', when lepidopterists, be it amateurs or professionals, could work in the collection by invitation and could make use of the extensive library of the NEV, at that time housed in the ZMA. This nice initiative was continued at

Naturalis in Leiden (momentarily interrupted because of building activities at the museum) after the merger of the ZMA with the (former) Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie and the National Herbarium (both in Leiden) to form Naturalis in 2010. After the transfer of the collection of the ZMA to Leiden, Harry kept visiting the collection on a regular basis until his health no longer permitted it. This was tough for a man so much devoted to the butterflies.

In view of Harry's interest in European butterflies, it was only understandable that Harry joined the foundation meeting of the SEL at Bonn in 1976. At meetings of the SEL he met two colleagues who would greatly influence his lepidopterological activities for many years to come. These were Gerhard Hesselbarth (deceased 1999) and Sigbert Wagner (deceased 2004). Together, they decided to publish a work on the Turkish butterflies, based on numerous field trips and the study of many collections. The resulting publication finally appeared in 1995 in three heavy volumes. This accomplished, Harry found more time for the butterflies he loved above all, the species of the taxonomically difficult genus *Melitaea*. Together with John Coutsis (Athens), who made most beautiful drawings of the numerous male genitalia dissections Harry produced, he finally published a monography of the genus in 2014.

A fruitful life has come to an end. May his (second) wife Iryna, his daughter Ingrid and his son Bob, together with their families, draw comfort from the warm feelings so many people still nurture for Harry.

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